

Subject: Celtic + Germanic coin collection--  
offers to sell (for \$45,000)

Stefan, Friedrich, Prof. Dr.  
[Graz, Austria]

1930-1931

Professor  
Dr. Friedrich Stefan  
Graz Bergmannsgasse Nr. 17

Mr. Howland Wood.  
Curator.

Dear Sir,

Permit me, to submit to you  
for your inspection

44 plates (photographs) of coins of one, of  
the most valued private collection of ancient  
coins. — These plates are numbered and  
marked A and B. — The A plate showing the  
front, the B plate, the reverse side of the coins.

Kindly preserve the plates as I must return  
them, in case the coins are not sold.

The plates come by registered mail  
addressed to you.

Further details follow by mail in a short  
time.

Very respectfully yours.

Gray. Austria  
Bergmannsgasse 17  
Oct. 14<sup>th</sup> 1930.

Friedrich Stefan

Professor  
Dr. Friedrich Stefan  
Graz Bergmannsgasse Nr. 17

Graz, am 2 November 1930.

Dear Sir,

As a member of the Vienna Numismatic Society and a scientific worker in Numismatics (period of the Teutonic migration) I desire to draw the attention of the members of your numismatic association to a great collection of extremely precious coins of the Celts, the Gallo- and Romano-Celts, the Celto-Germanic people, and finally of the various Germanic people of the period of migration up to its termination the beginning of the Carbo<sup>o</sup>ling period. This collection is quite unique in its kind with regard to its importance and comprehensiveness. For urgent reasons - it is to be sold as a whole, if possible, by its present owner.

As it is almost impossible here in Europe, to sell this magnificent collection as a whole unless it be separated by an auction sale. The owner asked me to submit this to you and to the members of your association. In doing so I trust that yourself, or someone known to you may purchase this collection as a whole, to save this, numismatic, and historically extremely valuable material from dispersion. This enormous comprehensive, collection particularly throws light on the beginning of the art of coining of the different Germanic tribes, and it would be well worth the trouble, with the assistance of this collection, to investigate into the beginning of the Germanic art in numismatics.

The collection comprises 2000 pieces which are in splendid condition. Among them are about 500 gold coins, the rest being half silver, and half copper coins. This collection contains as a scientific extremely valuable part a complete set of Germano-Celtic coins. Upon close examination of these coins, one may observe, that in the making of these coins, an imitation was attempted of the coins of the Roman Republic and the Roman Empire from the oldest times down to the period of the Teutonic migration (including the greater part of that period) besides the pure Celtic coins of all tribes.

The Germanic people themselves are represented by unique, complete sets which, arranged according to geographic-historical points of view, give a wonderful survey in the following order: Vandals in Africa, Suevi in Spain, Wisigoths in Spain, Moors in Spain; Burgundians, in Provence and Switzerland, Suevi and Herules in Italy, Ostrogoths in Italy, Lombards in Pavia and Beneventum, Normans in the south and north, Alemanni and Saxons in Central Germany, Franks in Gaul, Danes in Jutland, and Anglo-Saxons in Britain. The fact has to be pointed out that there are to be found in this collection unique, complete sets of great rarity of the Burgundian and Frankish kings, Nordic gold bracteates, the most precious<sup>w</sup> productions of the Germanic art of coining and stamping, also rare Germanic gold coins to say nothing about the many other first rate rarities.

The 2000 pieces of this collection are represented by photographs in a practical manner on 44 plates obverse and reverse natural size, and these magnificent tables are at the disposal for inspection of any serious<sup>i</sup> purchaser and will be added to the collection.

The price of this collection exactly estimated with regard to the invested capital, amounts to 60.000 dollars.

This collection of coins is probably the greatest which was ever brought together by a private person in the domain of Teutonic Numismatics from its beginning to the end of the Teutonic migration. Since its existence is at stake I request you urgently to call the attention of the members of your Society and other collectors of coins to this unique collection. Possibly an institute or a museum might be interested in these rare ancient Germanic coins and purchase this collection as a whole.

As a specialist within this domain I am at the disposal of any serious purchaser for further information with regard to determination estimate of price and sending of the tables and the collection.

After a substantial inspection and investigation, please send your reply to the address mentioned, below.

Yours respectfully

A. Dr. Friedrich Stefan,  
Professor,  
Graz, Bergmannsgasse 17.  
Austria.

Nov. 25, 1930

Professor Dr. Friedrich Stefan

Bergmannsgasse No. 17

Graz, Austria

Dear Sir:

Your various letters together with the package of photographs have been duly received. I have shown these to the most prominent collector of ancient coins in this country, as well as to two or three others. But unfortunately none of them are interested in purchasing the whole collection. It is really a very fine collection but the price is far too high, and I know it would be absolutely impossible to dispose of it in this country for anywhere near the sum you state. Undoubtedly the best way to sell it would be at auction, and several of the Swiss and German dealers are well equipped to do this. However, we should not advise doing so at the present time as conditions throughout the world are not advantageous for selling at a good price.

The photographs are being returned to you under separate cover as I can see absolutely no opportunity of doing anything further here with the collection.

Thanking you for your consideration and courtesy,

Very truly yours,

Curator.

Professor  
Dr. Friedrich Stefan  
Graz Bergmannsgasse Nr. 17 (Amstern)

Graz, am 13. Dezember 1930.

Hon.

Mister Howland Wood  
Curator  
The American Numismatic Society

NEW YORK.  
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Dear Sir,

I beg to ocknowledge receipt of your kind letter of  
Nov, 25-1930 and thank you for sames.-

In reply there to desire to submit to you a new proposition  
of \$.45.000.- for the entire collection.

m If this is not acceptable the owner is ready to divide the  
collection into three parts according to its scientific arrangement

- 1) Barbaric Ceseltic Coins at \$ 15.000.-
- 2) Germanic Celtic Coins at \$ 10.000.-
- 3) Germanic Coins during the period of migration at \$ 25.000.-

If the is a probability of disposing of a set of these  
coins, the photos as well as the coins will be submitted to you for  
inspection.

You state in your letter that the collectors were not  
interested in purchasing the entire collection. May I ask in whe what  
partienlar coins these gentlemen are interested ?

Thanking you for an early reply

yours truly

Dr. Friedrich Stefan,  
Professor.

Jan. 24, 1931

Professor Dr. Friedrich Stefan

Graz Bermanngasse, No. 17

Austria

Dear Dr. Stefan:

Your letter of December 13th is at hand. As far as I can ascertain there is absolutely no collector in this country who would be willing to pay anywhere near the price you ask for the collection of coins that you have to offer. Nor do I know of any museum sufficiently interested to buy these coins, especially that as a series they are not artistic. Collectors over here would buy single pieces but not large groups. As I think I stated before, they would rather buy at auction or single pieces submitted on approval. In passing, the price you ask is far too excessive.

Very truly yours,

Curator.